



Tom Barrett
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, CHE
Commissioner of Health

Administration



Frank P. Zeidler Municipal Building, 841 North Broadway, 3rd Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202-3653

phone (414) 286-3521 fax (414) 286-5990
web site: www.milwaukee.gov

For immediate release
July 28, 2006

Media Contact: Sandy Rusch Walton
414.286.3521 Office

BE PREPARED FOR HOT AND HUMID WEATHER IN MILWAUKEE THROUGH TUESDAY

*Health Commission Bevan Baker Reminds People to be Aware of
Heat-Related Symptoms and Illness*

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) encourages everyone in Milwaukee to pay close attention to symptoms of heat-related illness as heat indices possibly will approach or exceed 100 degrees this weekend, lasting into Tuesday of next week. While the National Weather Service (NWS) has not issued a Heat Advisory at this time, MHD Commissioner Bevan Baker advises area citizens to take appropriate protective measures if and when temperatures rise to extremes.

The people at greatest risk during extremely hot and humid weather are:

- Elderly persons and those who are isolated or live alone
- Infants and young children
- Those on certain medications including mental health drugs
- Those with chronic health conditions such as obesity, heart and lung ailments
- Those who work outside for a living

Sustained temperatures in excess of 90 degrees Fahrenheit coupled with humidity levels in excess of 65% are the conditions which pose a risk of heat-related illness and death.

General symptoms of **heat exhaustion** include fainting, rash, fatigue, and nausea. Skin may become clammy and moist. If symptoms of heat exhaustion are present, immediate action should be taken to reduce body temperature.

Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition that can happen very quickly. Hot, dry skin, the absence of sweat, nausea, confusion and unconsciousness are symptoms of heat stroke. Immediate medical attention is critical: call 911 and cool the victim.

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To prevent heat exhaustion or heat stroke, individuals at highest risk should spend the hottest part of the day in a cool, preferably air-conditioned place. Individuals who do not have air conditioning in the home should try to get to a location that does, such as a public library, community center, or shopping mall. People may also find some relief from the heat by going into their basements or to lower levels of their home.

Never leave pets or people, especially children and infants, unattended in cars--for even brief periods of time. Even with windows cracked open, temperatures inside a car can rise to life-threatening levels in a matter of minutes. Make frequent checks on the status of elderly or ill relatives or neighbors. If necessary, move them to an air-conditioned environment during the hottest part of the day.

Strenuous activity should be avoided during the hottest part of the day. If such activity is unavoidable, drink plenty of fluids and take frequent breaks in air-conditioned or shaded areas.

Finally, when temperatures are above 90° F, the MHD recommends that the following precautions be taken:

- To avoid dehydration, make a point of drinking more fluids during hot weather. Rapid weight loss may be a sign of dehydration.
- Use fans to increase ventilation unless temperatures exceed 90° F, at which point fans become ineffective in reducing heat-related illness.
- Cool showers, baths, and sponge baths can be used to reduce body temperatures. In addition, wet clothing has a cooling effect.
- Spending time in an air-conditioned space or even the basement will help prevent heat – related illness.

For more information on heat-related health concerns, visit the City of Milwaukee Health Department website at www.milwaukee.gov/heat

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